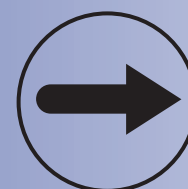


Summary of Responses to the Consultation Document on the National Basic Skills Strategy for Wales

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Adran Hyfforddiant ac Addysg
Department for Training and Education



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Title of Document: Summary of Responses to Consultation Document on the National Basic Skills Strategy for Wales.

Audience: All bodies concerned with education and training in Wales including schools, colleges and training providers, employer organisations and forums, Trades Unions, Sector Skills Councils , Jobcentre Plus, Careers Wales, Voluntary and Community Organisations , Prison and Probation Service and Youth Offending Teams.

Overview: This document provides a summary of the responses to the consultation document on the National Basic Skills Strategy for Wales. The consultation document was issued on 3rd December 2004 and the deadline for responses was 1st February 2005.

Action Required: N/A

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Additional copies: N/A

Related documents: Consultation Document on the National Basic Skills Strategy for Wales Words Talk-Numbers Count-*The Welsh Assembly Government's Strategy to improve basic literacy and numeracy in Wales.*

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO THE CONSULTATION DOCUMENT ON THE NATIONAL BASIC SKILLS STRATEGY FOR WALES

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SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO THE CONSULTATION DOCUMENT ON THE NATIONAL BASIC SKILLS STRATEGY FOR WALES

Summary

This document presents the results of the consultation on the proposed second phase of the National Basic Skills Strategy for Wales. The consultation was issued on 3 December 2004 with responses required by 1 February 2005. 119 responses were received in total. The responses came from a variety of organisations including schools, colleges and training providers, other bodies concerned with education and training, LEAs, Teaching Unions, Professional Associations, equality organisations and from business, including the CBI, TUC and Sector Skills Councils. A full list of respondents is included at Annex 1 and a summary of respondents' answers to the questions posed in the document is at Annex 2.

Areas of concern that were mentioned most often by respondents were:

- the need to make sure that all areas of Wales were covered by the proposals. Basic Skills needs exist across the whole country, not just in deprived areas.
- the teacher workforce, both pre and post-16, needs to be developed and properly trained to support literacy and numeracy across the curriculum.
- the need for long-term funding to enable forward, strategic planning.
- the development of listening skills was seen to be as important as reading, writing, speaking and numeracy.

General Comments

Comments received were very positive with respondents largely agreeing with the policies and proposals outlined in the document.

The Welsh Assembly Government would like to take this opportunity to thank all respondents to this consultation exercise.

Summary of responses

Q1. Do you agree with our definition of basic skills?

There were 114 respondents to this question and 91 (80%) agreed or strongly agreed with the definition of basic skills as set out in the document. There was widespread recognition that adequate levels of literacy and numeracy are the basic building blocks of all learning and should remain to be the focus of the Strategy, although several emphasised the importance of listening skills and thought they should be added.

Of the 20% who disagreed with the definition most suggested that ICT should be included as a basic skill as it is 'fundamental to modern life'. Others agreed that ICT should not be included as part of the Strategy for post-16 learners but should be considered for inclusion as a basic skill for school pupils. Some suggested that English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) should be included in the definition. A small number of respondents said that the use of the term 'basic skills' itself was a barrier to learning as it had a stigma attached.

Several respondents disagreed with the focus of the Strategy being Level 1 in the National Qualifications Framework. Some pointed out that national organisations and some employers operate throughout the UK and there was inconsistency with the Level 2 target of the Skills for Life Strategy in England. Others thought that staff and students would perceive basic skills training as low-status. However, the majority agreed with the focus on Level 1, recognising that that is the first step into learning and that the strategy and definition needs to be seen in the context of a continuum of learning.

Q2. Do you agree that the Strategy should be extended into a second stage?

The overwhelming response to this question was that the Strategy should be continued into a second stage. 108 respondents answered this question and 107 (99%) agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal.

The recognition that the basic skills deficit in Wales is a long - term problem requiring long - term solutions was welcomed. Several acknowledged that the first phase of the Strategy had put in place an effective structure to improve standards but said that, to ensure that the good work continues, extra funding must continue to be made available. Others recognised the importance of ensuring that activities currently supported by Strategy funding are incorporated into mainstream learning programmes, and that organisations and agencies involved in the skills agenda must integrate action on basic skills into their strategic plans.

Q3. Have we correctly identified the main issues that need to be addressed?

There were 85 respondents to this question and 75 (88%) agreed or strongly agreed that the main issues had been addressed.

Of those who disagreed, most suggested other significant issues that could have been included in this section, such as:

- the need for longer-term, ring-fenced funding to allow strategic forward planning;
- a greater emphasis on motivating Key Stage 4 pupils;
- low basic skills amongst offenders;
- the indifference of some parents who take no interest in the education of their children no matter what efforts are made to include them; and
- the patchy availability of reliable information, advice and guidance.

Q4. Do you agree with our approach and priorities?

There were 86 respondents to this question and 80% of people agreed or strongly agreed with the approach and priorities proposed in the document.

The consultation document identified several priority groups for particular attention, such as children in the early years, pupils under-attaining in schools, low-skilled people in the workforce and jobseekers, and several key issues that needed to be addressed, such as improving the quality of provision and raising awareness. Many respondents said that it is vital to keep the focus on the early years and under attaining-pupils, as this will have the biggest long-term impact. Some said that there was evidently a link between the number of adults with low literacy and numeracy and the high percentage of children with poor listening and speaking skills, so an all-age approach is crucial. The development of the teacher workforce both pre and post 16 was also seen by respondents as a positive aim of the strategy.

Of those who disagreed, some said that intervention at post -16 was too late to have any real impact on the life of the individual. Others said that the strategy simply had too many priorities to be effective and some pointed out that there would be considerable overlap between the identified priority groups. Some said that adults should be targeted by their level of attainment, not by which priority group they fall into, although there was some concern about the identification of adults currently at Entry Level 3 as a prime target, with the comment that all those below Level 1 should be targeted.

More than a few respondents were concerned about the proposal to target Communities First areas, arguing that basic skills needs occur in all areas of Wales and resources should be available to address need, wherever that occurs.

Q5. Do you agree with our proposals for tackling the issues and priorities?

73 respondents answered this question and 70 (96%) agreed or strongly agreed. However, there were some reservations.

Several respondents said that if we are serious about tackling deficiencies in basic skills through mainstream further education programmes, then this needs to be more accurately reflected in the funding system. For specific basic skills programmes, it was suggested that adults learn slowly and this should be recognised in the length of and funding for programmes. The point was made that not all post-16 learning is funded by ELWa, particularly public sector workers on courses which attract other UK government funding, so there is a danger that some people would miss out on basic skills screening and support.

Others wrote that careful consideration needed to be given to the personal development needs of staff in pre and post- 16 education and training. Some commented that there should be more sharing of information between schools and post-16 providers about the literacy and numeracy skills of 16-year-olds entering further education or training.

Q6. Do you agree with our proposals for implementing the Strategy?

There were 84 respondents to this question and 80 (95%) of them agreed or strongly agreed with the proposals for implementing the strategy.

The plan to set up a Strategic Implementation Group and regional partnership groups was welcomed though some said it was not clear how the regional partnership groups would link with CCETs and 14-19 networks.

There was widespread agreement to the proposals for monitoring the performance of children and post-16 learners who have low basic skills, by using currently available methods of assessment rather than introducing more tests. There was, however, a suggestion that there was a need for a basic skills added-value system of measurement. It was also suggested that performance indicators relating to the number of teachers qualified to deliver basic skills in the post-16 sector should be included in the monitoring arrangements.

The need to ensure equal access as well as equal entitlement was mentioned, with a proposal that outcomes should be monitored by gender, race and disability.

The recognition that improving basic skills can contribute to wider policy objectives, not just educational ones, was welcomed.

Summary of additional comments

Overall, there was strong support for the proposals in the consultation document - they were seen as practical and necessary to bring about the required increase in literacy and numeracy skills in Wales.

There was concern about the level of need amongst adults in Wales, as identified in the document. It was suggested that engaging a range of organisations outside the education sector would be easier if there was evidence of value-added benefits, and if information about funding sources was easily available.

There were comments on the scope for improving the use of written Welsh amongst first language Welsh speakers, which would improve basic skills in Welsh and promote full use of the language.

To identify areas of deprivation outside of Communities First areas, it was suggested that Estyn reports on schools are very good sources of information for identifying incipient underachievement.

There was some criticism of the lack of support for disengaged young people and youth offenders, where it was felt that FE colleges in particular could be asked to do more to link with other agencies to ensure that appropriate provision with the necessary support is available.

The need for ELWa and the Welsh Assembly Government to work closely together was emphasised, so that adequate funding for post-16 basic skills provision is available with no 'capping' so that programmes are allowed to grow to meet the rise in demand that the Strategy will generate.

NATIONAL BASIC SKILLS STRATEGY CONSULTATION RESPONSES

	NAME	ORGANISATION
1	Withheld	
2.	P.Davitt	Hawarden High School
3.	Canon Dr Keith Denison	Church in Wales (Diocese of Monmouth)
4.		Coleg Llysfasi
5.	C.W.Evans	Pembroke School
6.	Withheld	
7.	R. Geraint Roberts	
8.	Gareth L Parry	Ysgol Gwaun Gynfi Deiniolen Gwynedd
9.	Adele Baumgardt	Equal Opportunities Commission
10.	Ben Cottam	Federation of Small Businesses in Wales
11.	Anna Foote	Tredegar Comprehensive School
12.	Mr V Ward	21 Conduit Place Port Talbot SA13 2TT
13.	Sue Floyd	Second Chance
14.	Ms Hilary Jones	St Cyres School Vale of Glamorgan
15.	Ceri Griffiths	WEFO
16.	Jan Neil	Hafod y Wern Junior School,Wrexham
17.	Beverley Paddey	Skillsmart Retail Ltd
18.	Tracie Jennett	Language Play Coordinator, Swansea
19.	Dr John Parkinson	Swansea School of Education
20.	Withheld	
21.	Withheld	
22.	Hilary Farley	Gladstone Primary School, Barry
23.	Ian Thomas	E skills SSC
24.	David Jones	Deeside College
25.	Stephen Brangwyn	Cardiff ITEC
26.	Ian Williams	ELWa
27.	Emma Watkins	CBI Wales
28.	Pam Boyd	Glyn Derw High School Cardiff
29.	Sara Theaker, Christine Davies and Andrew Heylin	Jobcentre Plus
30.	Dr Steve Bell	Coleg Sir Gar
31.	Withheld	
32.	Henry Roberts	WDA
33.	G. Worgan	Waunbwyd Primary School Blaenau Gwent
34.	Dr Heledd Hayes	Education Officer NUT Cymru
35.	Anne Owen	Language and Play Co-ordinator, Powys
36.	Liz Hinkley	Powys LEA Schools Section
37.	Anna Brychan	NAHT Cymru
38.	Len Cheston	Home Office
39.	H.G. Lyn Clement	Welsh Secondary Schools Association
40.	Jaine Chisholm Caunt	Head of Policy, Skillsfast UK
41.	Owenna Davies	Ceredigion LEA
42.	Diana Samuel	Lecturer, Swansea
43.	Withheld	
44.	Jill Blacklin	Energy and Utility Skills

**NATIONAL BASIC SKILLS STRATEGY
CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

	NAME	ORGANISATION
45.	Jean Davies	Coleg Llysfasi
46.	Dr Steven Bell	Coleg Sir Gar
47.	Jeff Loxton	Vale of Glamorgan School Improvement Service
48.	Withheld	
49.	Helen Dobie	Yale College, Wrexham
50.	Deborah Rees	Neath Port Talbot CBC
51.	Ruth Appleby	WDA
52.	Joyce Baynes	Valelearning.net
53.	Gill Williams	Coleg Menai, Gwynedd
54.	Debbie John	Dynevor Information Centre Dynevor
55.	Withheld	
56.	John Watkin	Flintshire LVC Mold
57.	Withheld	
58.	Tim Burton	National Extension College
59.	Sian Verrall	National Childminding Association
60.	Angela Fomison	Ufi Cymru
61.	Chris Abbott	ESIS, Treforest
62.	Andrew Thomson	LSDA
63.	Joy Khaghanian	Neath Port Talbot CBC
64.	Caroline Morgan	National Probation Service
65.	Catrin Jones	Denbigh CCET
66.	Sylvia Fisher	Bridgend College
67.	Rosemary Maudsley	Learning Pembrokeshire
68.	Yvonne Griffiths Jones	Chwarae Teg
69.	Withheld	
70.	Kathryn Hopkins Morgan	Summitskills LTD.
71.	C A Mills	Holistic Learning, Mold, Flintshire
72.	Pippa John Cooke	Policy and Partnership Office, Cardiff
73.	Withheld	
74.	Sarah Shum	Improve Ltd, York
75.	Sally Elliott	Pembrokeshire College
76.	Withheld	
77.	David Finch	Ystrad Mynach College
78.	Christine Phillips	Pembrokeshire County Council
79.	Robin Lynn	Equality Action Officer
80.	Brace Griffiths	Jobcentre Plus
81.	Sian M Jones	Bridgend County Council
82.	Richard Morgan	Wales Tourist Board
83.	Sally Ambrose	Skills for Justice
84.	Bob Howells	Caerphilly County Borough Council
85.	Gary Brace	General Teaching Council for Wales
86.	Carl Peters	UCET Cymru
87.	Richard Tobutt	Skills Active Cardiff
88.	John Roberts	University of Wales, Newport
89.	Wendy Ellaway	NIACE Dysgu Cymru

**NATIONAL BASIC SKILLS STRATEGY
CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

	NAME	ORGANISATION
90.	Frank Callus	VITCC Coleg Gwent
91.	Sharon Simpson	Asset Skills, Northampton
92.	Margaret Phelan	NATFHE
93.	Withheld	
94.	Sian Roberts	Coleg Harlech
95.	Susan Coleman	ESTYN
96.	Catrin Wyn Champion	Senior Development Officer
97.	Mal Gay	YOT Manager Bridgend CBC
98.	Victoria March	Care Council for Wales
99.	David Giles	Vale Learning Network
100.	Greg Walker	Youth Justice Board
101.	Sheenagh Sykes	National Support Project, Pontypridd
102.	Gaynor Lewis	City and Guilds Cymru
103.	Kim Walsh	Torfaen County Borough Council
104.	Louise Hillier	North Wales Probation Area
105.	Huw Evans	Coleg Llandrillo, Llandudno
106.	Zena Cooper	Vale of Glamorgan Early Learning Centre
107.	Rona Lewis	Coleg Meirion Dwyfor, Dolgellau
108.	Peter Treadwell	UWIC
109.	Darron Dupre	Wales TUC
110a.	Rhian Huws Williams	Care Council for Wales
110b.	Linda Jordan	Newport
111.	Iris Hammett	Swansea NHS Trust
112.	Jacqui Weatherburn	Coleg Ceredigion, Cardigan
113.	John Graystone	Fforwm
114.	Duncan Gardner	Lantra SSC
115.	Peter McAllister	ELWa
116.	Anne Evans	Coleg Powys
117.	Val Hughes	Neath Port Talbot College
118.	D. Hugh Thomas	Chairman Swansea NHS Trust
119.	Angie Oliver	Skills for Health

**NATIONAL BASIC SKILLS STRATEGY
SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION QUESTIONS					
	Number of respondents	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Question					
1. Do you agree with our definition of basic skills?	114	35	56	22	1
2. Do you agree that the Strategy should be extended into a second stage?	108	67	40	1	0
3. Have we correctly identified the main issues that need to be addressed?	85	22	53	8	2
4. Do you agree with our approach and priorities?	86	23	45	16	2
5. Do you agree with our proposals for tackling the issues and priorities?	73	26	44	3	0
6. Do you agree with our proposals for implementing the Strategy?	84	23	57	4	0